



PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

ITEM: 2015-IV-T1
October 22, 2015

GENERAL LOCATION: Newington Road, between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road.

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: Mount Vernon

PLANNING AREA: Area IV

PLANNING DISTRICT:
Springfield Planning District

SUB-DISTRICT DESIGNATION:
S6-Newington Community Planning Sector

PARCEL LOCATION: Tax Map 99-4

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING:
Thursday, November 5, 2015 @ 8:15 PM

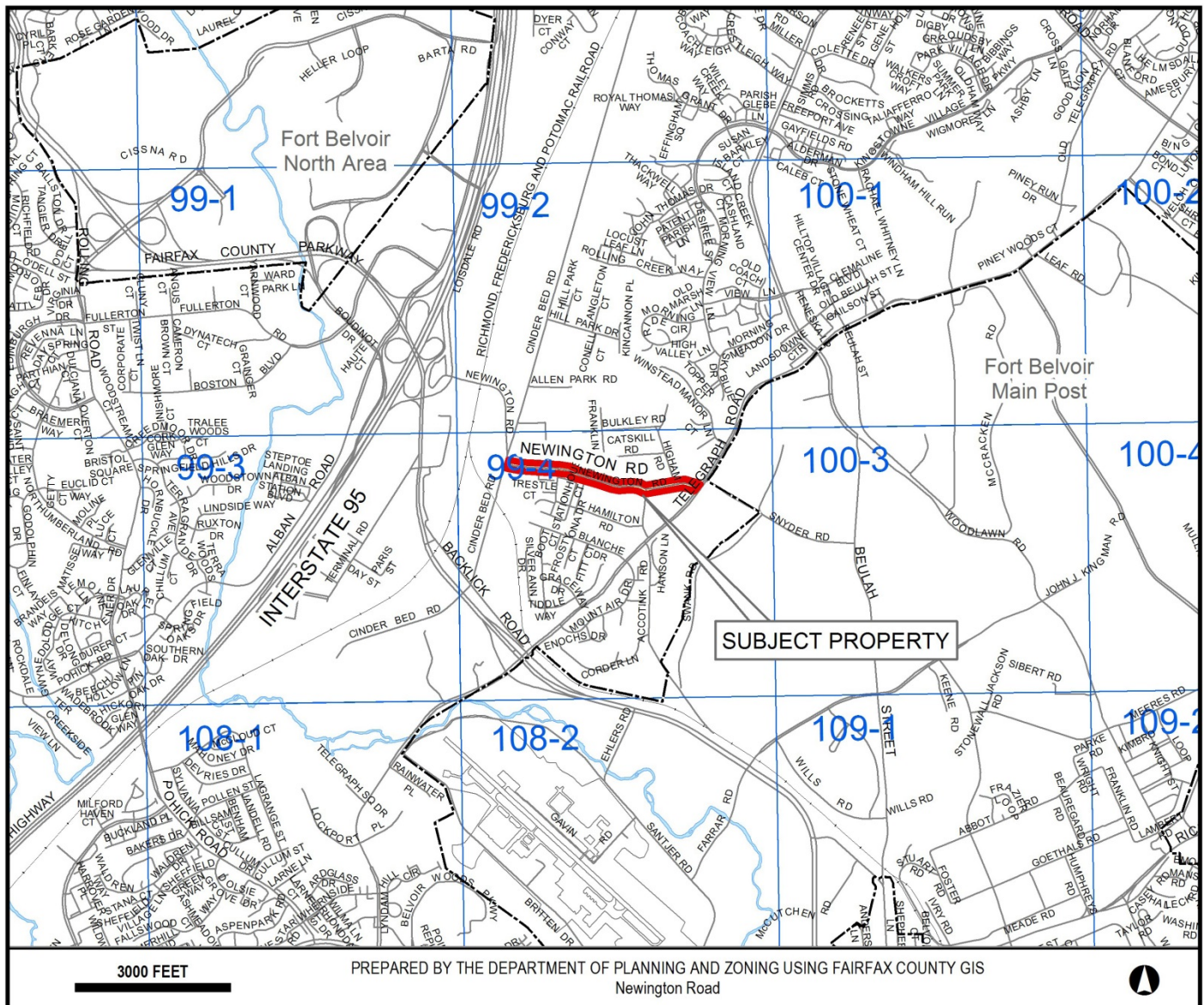
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARING:
Tuesday, November 17, 2015 @ 4:00 PM

**PLANNING STAFF DOES NOT RECOMMEND
THIS ITEM FOR PLAN AMENDMENT**



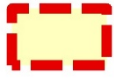
Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours notice. For additional information about accommodation call the Planning Commission office at (703) 324-2865, or the Board of Supervisors office at (703) 324-3151.

For additional information about this amendment call (703) 877-5600.

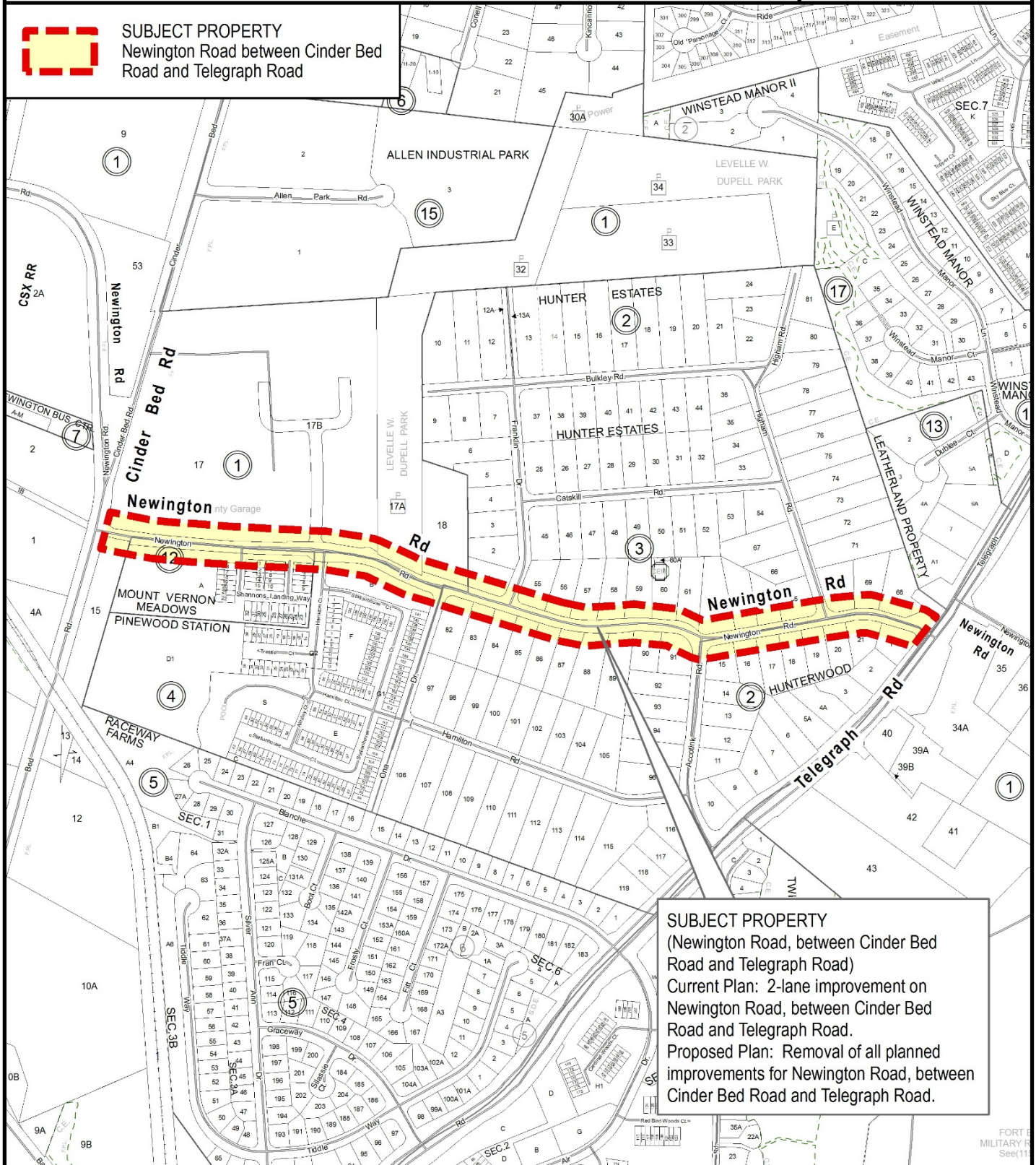


CURRENT PLAN AND PROPOSED CHANGE
PARCEL LOCATION MAP SHOWING CURRENT PLAN AND
PROPOSED CHANGE FOR NEWINGTON ROAD

ITEM:
2015-IV-T1



SUBJECT PROPERTY
 Newington Road between Cinder Bed
 Road and Telegraph Road



SUBJECT PROPERTY
 (Newington Road, between Cinder Bed
 Road and Telegraph Road)
 Current Plan: 2-lane improvement on
 Newington Road, between Cinder Bed
 Road and Telegraph Road.
 Proposed Plan: Removal of all planned
 improvements for Newington Road, between
 Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road.

600 FEET

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING USING FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS
 PARCEL INFORMATION CURRENT TO OCTOBER 2015
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STAFF REPORT FOR PLAN AMENDMENT 2015-IV-T1

BACKGROUND

On July 28, 2015, the Board of Supervisors (Board) authorized the consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment for Newington Road in the Springfield Planning District, Mount Vernon Magisterial Supervisor District.

The adopted Plan for this area recommends widening Newington Road to 4 lanes, from Loisdale Road to Cinder Bed Road (including improving an existing one-lane underpass under the CSX railroad tracks) and upgrading the existing 2-lane segment, from Cinder Bed Road to Telegraph Road, to meet current safety and design standards. Improvements could include widening existing lanes, reducing curves, adding sidewalks, bicycle facilities, turn lanes, or some combination, where necessary. The existing plan does not include adding lanes to this section of Newington Road. The Board requested that staff consider the removal of all planned transportation improvements, identified in the Comprehensive Plan and policy documents, for the segment of Newington Road located between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road. The request also directed staff to analyze where traffic will go if it does not use Newington Road.

EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The section of Newington Road included in this Plan amendment is located east of I-95 and north of the Fairfax County Parkway, connecting Telegraph Road on the east, to Cinder Bed Road on the west. The character of Newington Road, between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road, changes dramatically from the west to the east. The western portion of the segment, located between Cinder Bed Road to just west of Ona Drive, likely meets current safety, visibility and design standards with wider travel lanes that can be shared by vehicles and bicyclists. This portion also has pedestrian facilities on at least one side of the roadway. The picture below shows this existing segment:



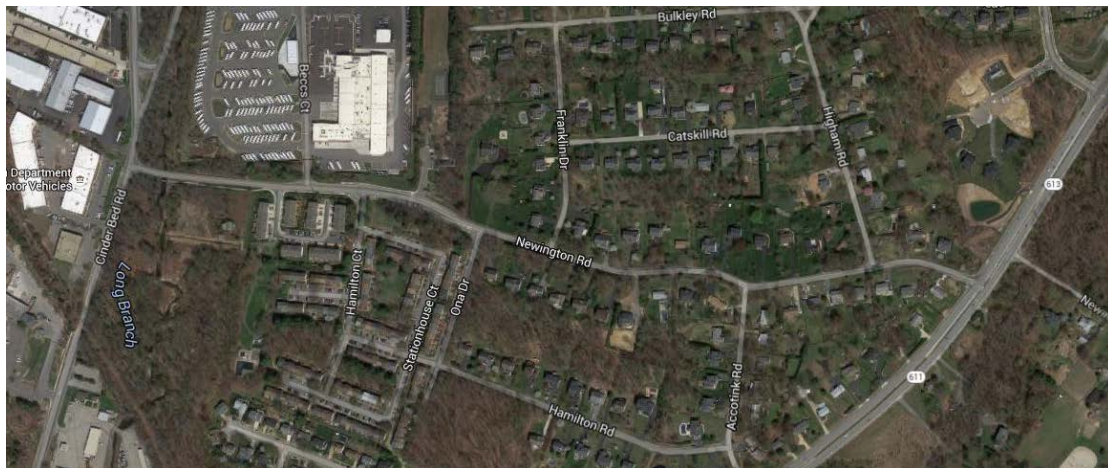
Newington Road just west of its intersection with Ona Drive.

The eastern portion of the segment, from just west of Ona Drive to Telegraph Road, has poor sight distances, no pedestrian facilities, lanes that are too narrow to be shared by both vehicles and bicyclists and likely does not meet current safety, visibility and design standards. The picture below shows this existing segment:



Newington Road, just west of its intersection with Accotink Road.

Although the eastern segment of this roadway appears rural in character in the picture, it is lined with single family residential development at suburban density levels. The uses that line Newington Road, between Telegraph Road and Cinder Bed Road, are primarily single-family detached dwelling units, however, there is a community of single-family attached dwelling units (townhouses) and industrial uses on the western end of the segment, near the intersection of Newington Road and Cinder Bed Road. Levelle Dupell Park, a Fairfax County Park Authority Park, is also located along this segment, just west of Ona Drive, on the north side of Newington Road. The aerial picture, below, shows the entire length of Newington Road between Telegraph Road and Cinder Bed Road, along with the existing adjacent uses.



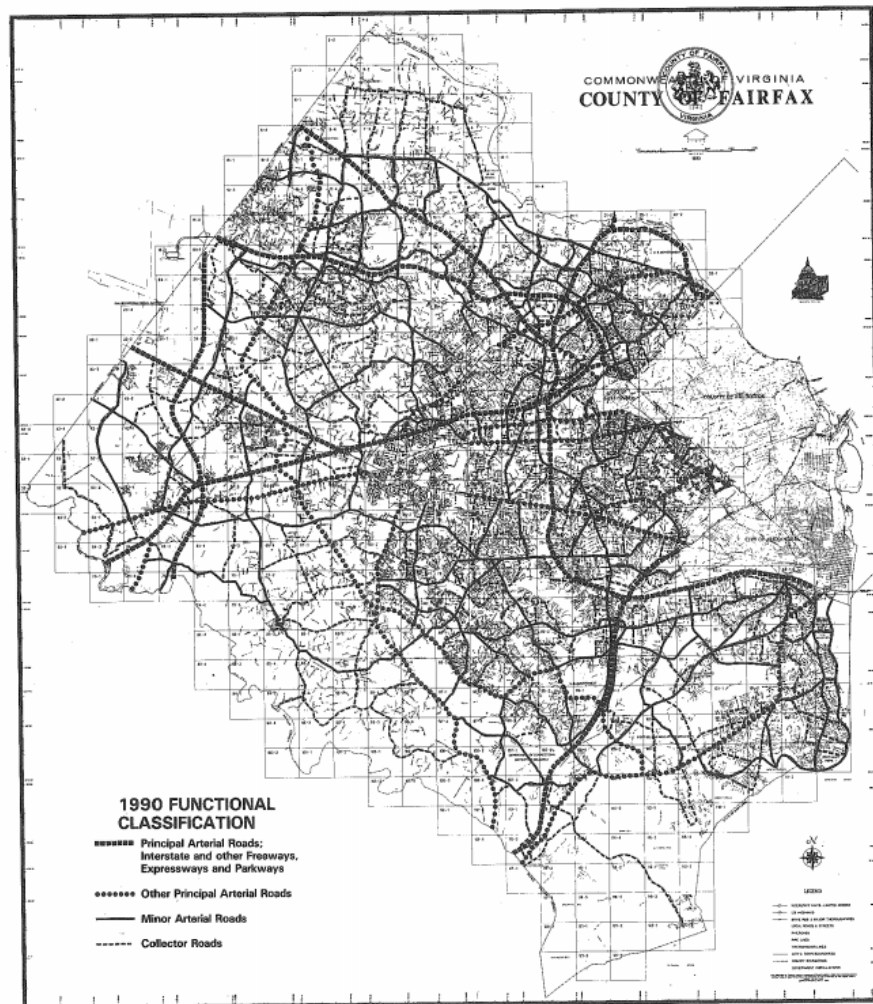
Aerial photo of Newington Road between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road.

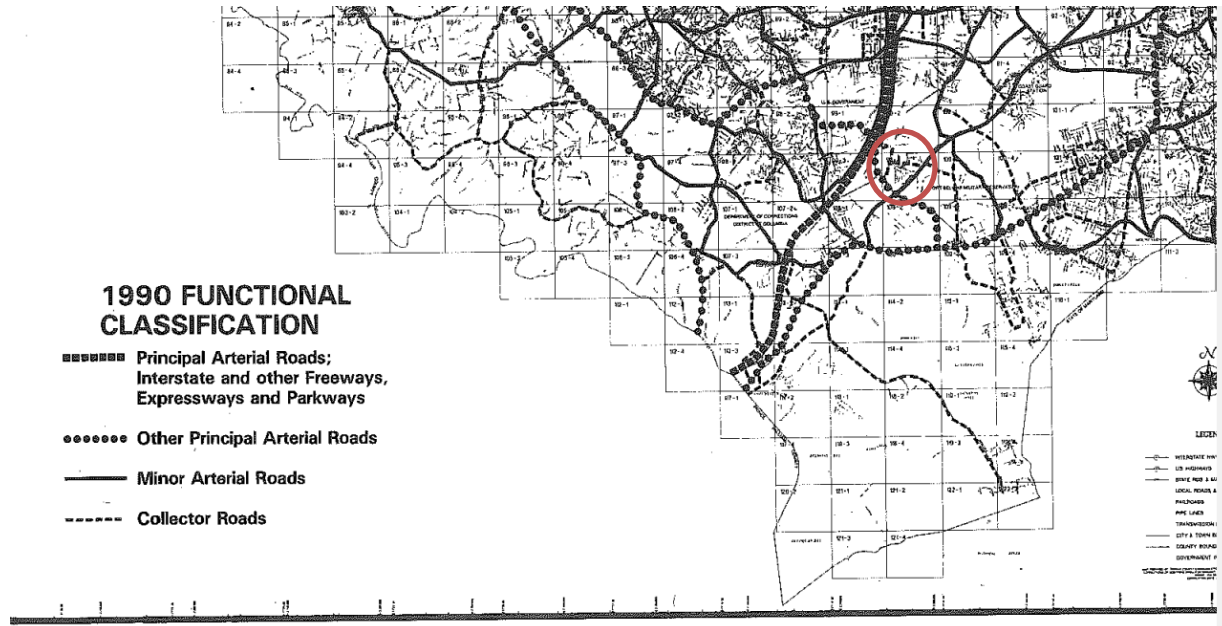
Transit service in the area is provided by Fairfax Connector (FC) Route 334 which serves the area via a stop located at the intersection of Newington Road and Cinder Bed Road. FC 334 provides A.M. and P.M. peak period service, on 20 to 30 minute headways, connecting the area to the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station.

PLANNING HISTORY

Improvements to Newington Road have been in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan since 1990, as shown in the graphics and text below, from the amended 1989 Comprehensive Plan. Newington Road is functionally classified as a minor collector street, described by the Virginia Department of Transportation's Functional Classification Comprehensive Guide as "serving both land access and traffic circulation in lower density residential and commercial/industrial areas."

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 1986 Edition, 1989 Reprint - Introduction/Countywide





The text below, from the amended 1989 Comprehensive Plan, refers to planned improvements on Newington Road:

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 1986 Edition, Countywide Plan, amended through 10-27-1986, Area IV Recommendations, Springfield Planning District, Sector S6, Page I/C 45:

“Sector S6

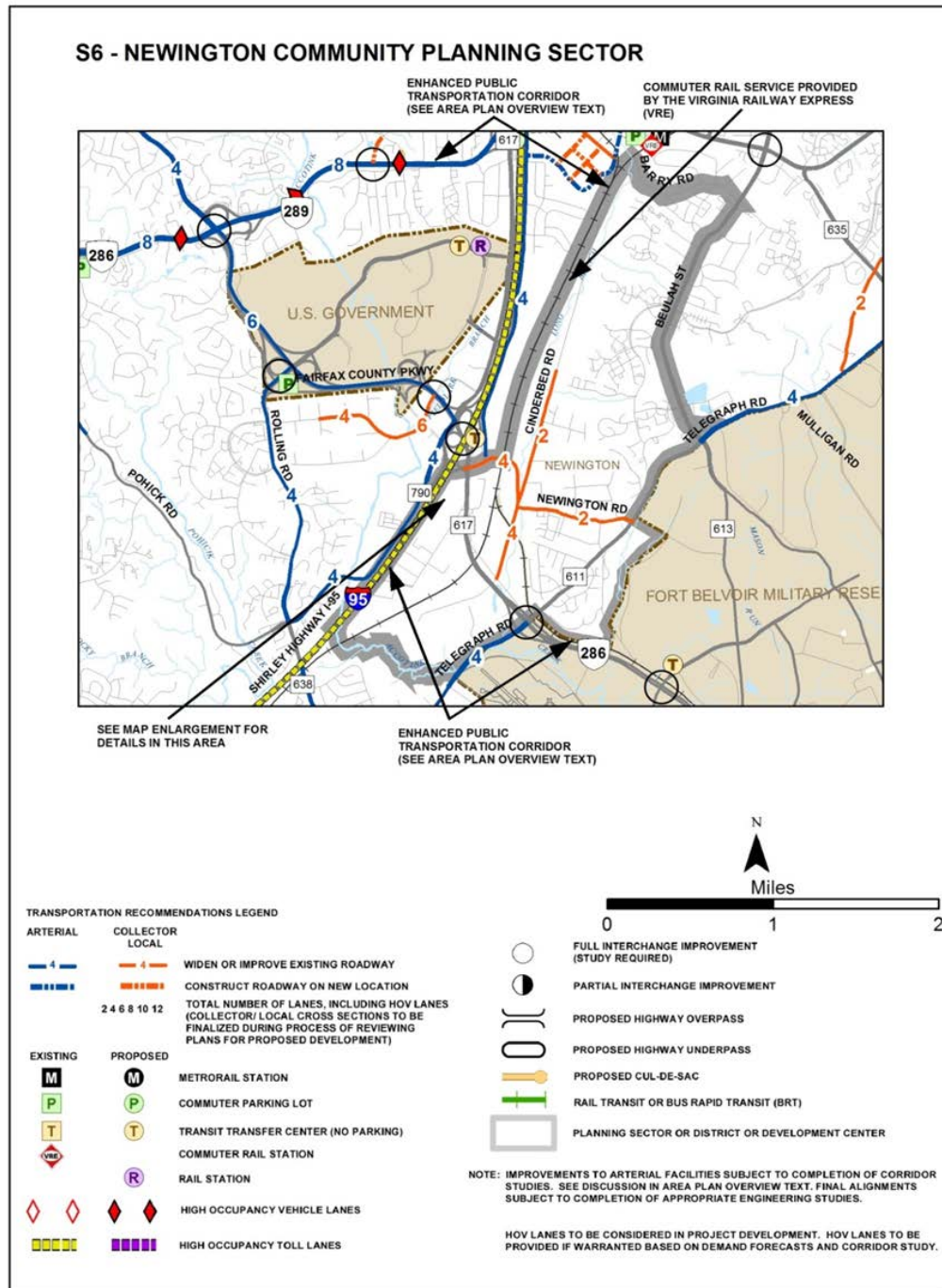
A. Beulah Street should be widened to a four-lane facility from Franconia Road to Telegraph Road, since Beulah Street will serve as the eastern terminus of the Bypass spur in the vicinity of the proposed Franconia/Springfield Metro Station. Also, the vertical and horizontal alignment of Beulah Street should be improved here.

B. The following roads should be improved two-lane facilities: Cinder Bed Road, Newington Road from Backlick Road to Telegraph Road, and Accotink Road from Newington Road to Telegraph Road. The intersections of these roads, and substandard bridges and underpasses traversing these roads should also be improved.

C. Through truck traffic should be prohibited on local and collector streets in the Lorton/Newington area to the maximum extent possible.”

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Area IV, Springfield Planning District, amended through 10-20-2015; Figure 29, "Transportation Recommendations, S6 Newington Community Planning Sector;" page 72:



Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Area IV, Springfield Planning District, amended through 10-20-2015, pages 3-4:

- “Establish land use and urban patterns in the Springfield Area that support mass transit and ridership;
- In the Springfield Area, incorporate and give priority to mass transit in the design of all major public and private projects;
- Develop trails and mass transit resources to provide access to the Van Dorn Metrorail Station and the Joseph Alexander Transportation Center;
- Improve circulation in and around the community by the management of existing transportation facilities and by promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use; ”

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Policy Plan, Transportation, amended through 10-20-2015, page 2:

COUNTYWIDE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

“Objective 1: Provide for both through and local movement of people and goods via a multi-modal transportation system that provides transportation choices, reduces single-occupancy-vehicle (SOV) use and improves air quality.

- “Policy a. Integrate motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities and services in accordance with transportation elements in the Transportation Plan Map (Figure 1), the Countywide Trails Plan Map (Figure 2), Bicycle Network Map (Figure 3) and the Bicycle Master Plan, chapters 1-4 (Appendix 5).
- Policy b. Provide motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities or improvements that best meet county goals as determined by detailed corridor and/or subarea studies. Provide for full public participation in such studies.”

ADOPTED FAIRFAX COUNTY BICYCLE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fairfax County Bicycle Master Plan, adopted by the Board in October 2014, identifies a “shared roadway with safety treatment” facility on Newington Road to provide safe access for bicyclists. This facility would connect an existing bicycle lane on Telegraph Road to a planned bicycle lane on Cinder Bed Road. The addition of this improvement would address the existing safety concerns for bicyclists on this segment of Newington Road.

ADOPTED FAIRFAX COUNTY TRAILS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fairfax County Trails Plan, adopted by the Board in 2001, identifies a “minor paved trail” facility on Newington Road to provide safe access for recreational bicyclists and for pedestrians. This facility would connect an existing major paved trail, on Telegraph Road, to a planned major trail on Cinder Bed Road. The addition of this improvement would address the existing safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists on this segment of Newington Road.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT

On July 28, 2015 the Board of Supervisors authorized the consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment for Newington Road in the Springfield Planning District, Mount Vernon Magisterial District. The adopted Plan for this area recommends widening Newington Road to 4 lanes, from Loisdale Road to Cinder Bed Road (including improving an existing one-lane underpass under the CSX railroad tracks) and improving the existing 2 lane segment, from Cinder Bed Road to Telegraph Road. Improvements could include lane widening, straightening, adding turn lanes, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, or some combination where necessary. The Board requested that staff consider the removal of all planned improvements for the segment of Newington Road located between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road. The Board also directed staff to analyze where traffic will go if it does not use Newington Road.

ANALYSIS

Newington Road is currently the only road providing connectivity for local trips between Telegraph Road on the east and Cinder Bed Road on the west. Traffic counts, taken in 2010, indicate approximately 4,000 daily trips are made on this section of Newington Road. This high volume of trips highlights the importance this roadway serves as part of the overall transportation network. As the region continues to grow, traffic volumes on all Fairfax County roadways are anticipated to grow, increasing the need for greater connectivity, the use of alternative modes to make trips and the importance of roadways like Newington Road to disperse traffic and support local trips.

As described earlier in this staff report, the character of Newington Road, between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road, changes dramatically from the west to the east. The western portion of the segment, located between Cinder Bed Road to just west of Ona Drive, likely meets current safety, visibility and design standards with travel lanes that can be shared by vehicles and bicyclists, and pedestrian facilities on at least one side of the roadway (the south side). This combination of wider travel lanes, and the presence of pedestrian facilities, not only provide a safer facility for drivers but also ensures safe and adequate alternative mode access is available to bus service currently provided along Cinder Bed Road, giving residents of the area transportation options other than traveling by use of a single occupant vehicle.

However, the eastern portion of the segment, from just west of Ona Drive to Telegraph Road, has poor sight distances, no pedestrian facilities, lanes that are too narrow to be safely shared by both vehicles and bicyclists and likely does not meet current safety, visibility and design

standards. With lanes that are too narrow to safely be shared by vehicles and bicycles, and no pedestrian facilities, an approximate 2,156 ft, or .4 mile, gap exists between existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the western end of the segment and Telegraph Road. This gap creates an extremely dangerous situation for bicyclists and pedestrians along this segment, making it nearly impossible to access existing bus service on Cinder Bed Road or to access Levell Dupell Park by any means other than driving.

The Fairfax County Transportation Plan, an element of the Comprehensive Plan, ensures the provision of facilities that can safely accommodate all modes of transportation and encourages the use of alternative modes such as transit, biking and walking. In line with Plan guidance for the Springfield Planning District, as well as overall County policy, planned transportation improvements to Newington Road will address the following:

- Develop trails and mass transit resources to provide access to the Van Dorn Metrorail Station and the Joseph Alexander Transportation Center;
- Improve circulation in and around the community by the management of existing transportation facilities and by promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use;
- Integrate motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities and services in accordance with transportation elements in the Transportation Plan Map (Figure 1), the Countywide Trails Plan Map (Figure 2), Bicycle Network Map (Figure 3) and the Bicycle Master Plan, chapters 1-4 (Appendix 5).
- Provide motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities or improvements that best meet county goals as determined by detailed corridor and/or subarea studies.

As part of this analysis, the Board directed staff to analyze where traffic will go if it does not use Newington Road. However, planned “2-lane improvements” to existing 2-lane facilities aren’t anticipated to increase vehicle capacity. These improvements are likely to consist of lane widenings, straightening, adding turn lanes, bicycle facilities, sidewalks or some combination where necessary. These improvements can improve traffic flow, improve safety and encourage the use of alternative modes for trip making but aren’t anticipated to increase vehicle capacity or lead to increased traffic volumes. If anything, the addition of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities increases the desirability of using alternative modes for trip making, helping to abate further increases in vehicle traffic volumes. Therefore, it is not possible to analyze where traffic will go if it does not use Newington Road.

The Fairfax County Transportation Plan contains numerous “2-lane road improvements” planned for existing 2-lane roadways. Rather than evaluate the necessity of each of these planned improvements individually, a more comprehensive approach should be taken.

CONCLUSION

The goals for the Springfield Planning District, as well as overall County policy, encourage the provision of transportation infrastructure designed to accommodate the safe use of all modes,

especially the use of alternative modes such as walking, biking and using transit, as well as the design of roadways that meet Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County design standards. In light of these overarching goals, Fairfax County Department of Transportation staff recommends that planned transportation improvements for Newington Road, between Cinder Bed Road and Telegraph Road, not be removed from the Fairfax County Transportation Plan Map and Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. Planned “2-lane improvements” for Newington Road are not anticipated to increase vehicle capacity. Therefore, it isn’t possible or necessary to determine where vehicles will go if the planned improvements to Newington Road are not made. It should also be noted that there are no current plans, or funding associated, to implement any plans for this segment of Newington Road.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the current Comprehensive Plan recommendation be retained.